

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Trade Negotiations Committee

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COLOMBIA

Statement by H.E. Mr. Guillermo Alberto González
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

Since the beginning of the Round the world has changed radically.

The great achievement of these negotiations has been to produce results which are in accord with the new era and new global aspirations. The Round has thus had its own momentum.

From the preparatory stage onwards my country has played an active and participatory rôle and was certain of success. It was convinced that today, in an interrelated world, it was necessary to have negotiating frameworks in which disputes could be resolved.

The culmination of the Uruguay Round and its major achievement, the creation of the World Trade Organization, constitutes the best form of support which the international community could offer in the process of openness, modernization and growth undertaken by a large number of countries, including Colombia.

Commitments in the area of market access, regulation of the agricultural and textiles sectors, trade policy, trade in services and intellectual property are consistent with the economic measures applied by Colombia and with the integration treaties which we have concluded recently in the context of the Andean Group, the Group of Three, and in general with other Latin American countries. They are also consistent with the spirit of the NAFTA Agreement to which Colombia hopes to accede before very long.

The Uruguay Round negotiations, which for the first time concerned matters related to trade in services, foreign investment and intellectual property, have created an economic context with fewer barriers, a greater rôle for multilateral commitments and less vulnerability to unilateral pressure and regional discrimination.

The negotiations have also marked a step towards remedying the problem of agricultural subsidies and trade restrictions in this sector by developed countries, as well as import restrictions on exports of textiles and clothing from developing countries.

The thirty agreements contained in the Final Act of the Round will constitute a higher level of commitment, not only for Colombia but for the global community as a whole, provided that the few countries which are not yet in GATT become members. Consequently, our policy of openness will at least be protected by the rules and commitments of the multilateral trade system.

The multilateral trade system, to comprise GATT, the agreement on services, the agreement on intellectual property and an integrated and strengthened system for the settlement of trade disputes, inherent in these three pillars of the organization, will increase the capacity for negotiation and defence against the protectionist pressures which occur in developed countries.

All analyses indicate that a regulated and increasingly open multilateral trade system such as that which has been negotiated in the Round will be the most effective way of reactivating the global economy, affected by a crisis which has lasted for more than four years.

Although the specific results concerning some of Colombia's objectives have not been up to expectations, there will nevertheless be a forum to take into account its claims and deal with disputes in a more transparent manner.

We had hoped that within the Uruguay Round it would have been possible to announce a satisfactory outcome to the problem of bananas, so as to dismantle the illegal and discriminatory régime which the European Union started to apply on 1 July 1993 to the detriment of banana prices and the well-being of thousands of families in Latin America.

If efforts are made during the forthcoming revision process towards a just solution to our demands, this will avoid a long and difficult debate but political will and commitment on the part of the European Union is required.

Many just aims remain pending. In particular, there should be less rhetoric in demanding openness and competitiveness while in practice failing to achieve any real results in the elimination of subsidies and the abolition of barriers to increased participation by developing countries, which are engaged in a difficult struggle against poverty, hunger and disease. This situation explains why so many developing countries participated so actively in the negotiations, to which they have contributed their efforts and aspirations.

My country would like to pay tribute first of all to you, Mr. Chairman, and then to your close collaborators, for their incredible dedication and unstinting efforts in the cause. You, Mr. Chairman, have been a true leader in the process, with the energy and flexibility required to achieve this final success.

You and all in this room can rely on our country, which will continue to work tirelessly towards these common objectives.